

CONAN THE
BARBARIAN

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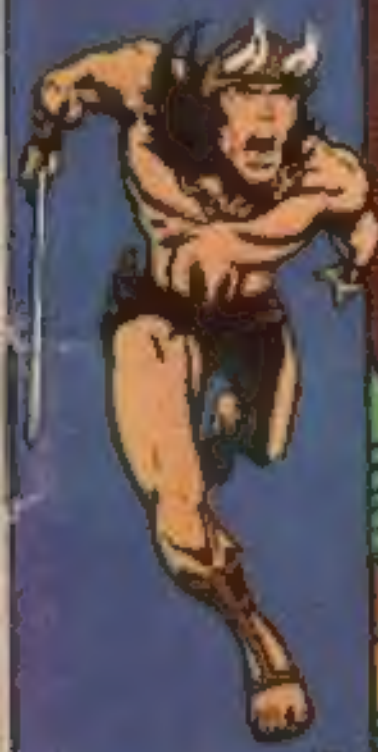
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CONAN

THE BARBARIAN



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TO THE
DEATH!

THE
COMING OF CONAN!

THE COMING OF CONAN!

COME WITH US TO
THE HYBORIAN AGE!

COME WITH US, BACK TO THE DARK CENTURIES WHICH SPRAWL BETWEEN THE SINKING OF ATLANTIS AND THE DAWN OF RECORDED TIME-- TO THE DAYS WHEN THE NOW-FORGOTTEN LAND OF AQUILONIA WAS THE MIGHTIEST OF NATIONS-- AND A MAN'S LIFE WAS WORTH NO MORE THAN THE STRENGTH OF HIS SWORD-ARM!

COME WITH US TO THE RAW, UNTAMED WORLD OF---

**CONAN
THE BARBARIAN!**

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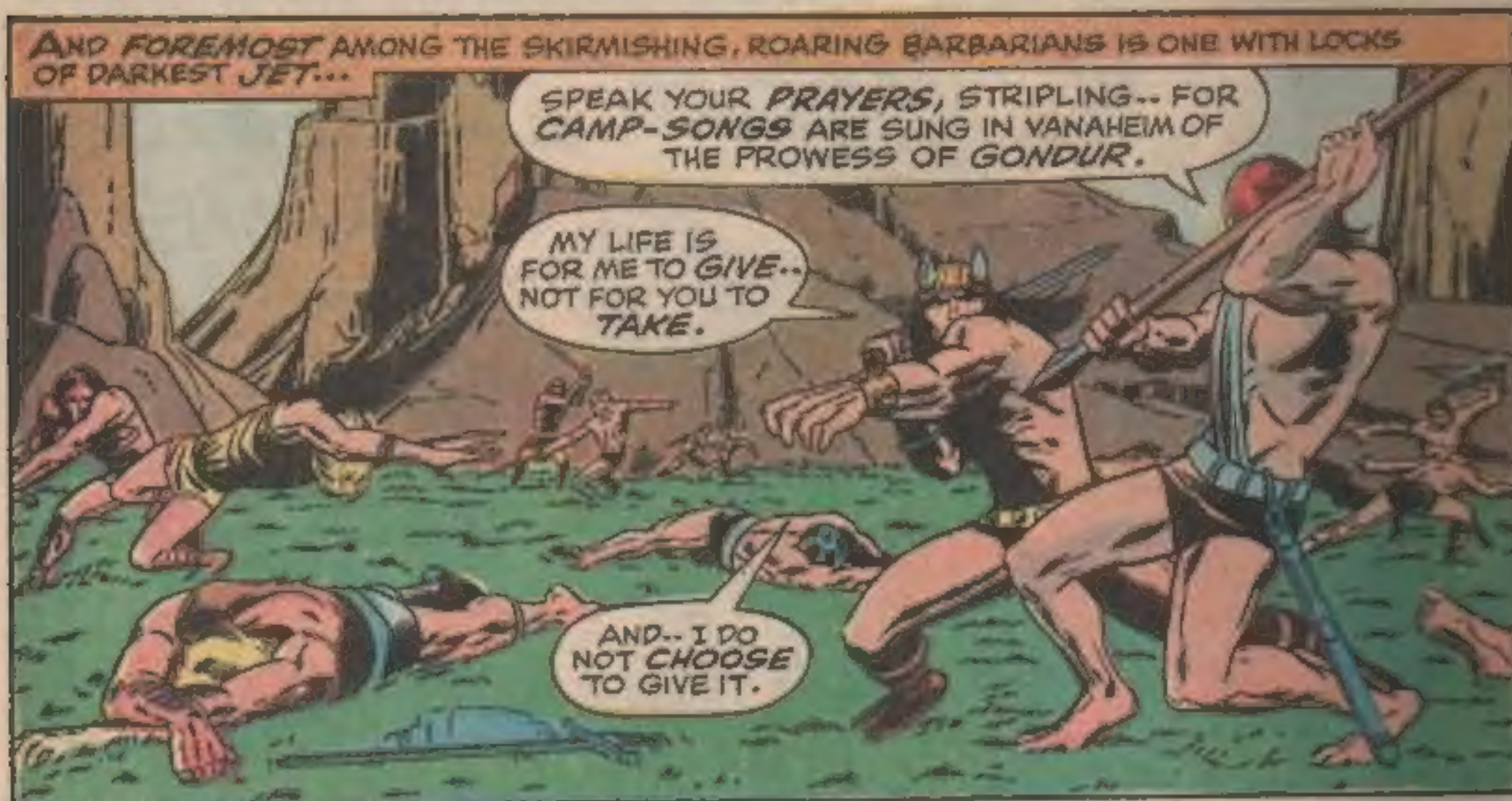
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IT IS SUMMER IN VANAHEIM, ONE OF THE NORTHERN-MOST OF ALL THE KNOWN OR UNKNOWN LANDS.. AND THE LAST TRACES OF VAGRANT SNOW **VANISH** LIKE SOFTLY DYING DREAMS ON BOTH MOUNTAIN AND PLAIN---



BUT, THIS DAY, THE BLOOD-EYED SUN LOOKS DOWN ON THE SLASH AND SAVAGERY OF COMBAT.. AS A RAIDING-PARTY OF **AESIR** DO BATTLE WITH THE FIERCE-BORN **VANIR**...

AND FOREMOST AMONG THE SKIRMISHING, ROARING BARBARIANS IS ONE WITH LOCKS OF DARKEST JET...



SPEAK YOUR **PRAYERS**, STRIPLING.. FOR **CAMP-SONGS** ARE SUNG IN VANAHEIM OF THE PROWESS OF **GONDUR**.

MY LIFE IS FOR ME TO **GIVE**.. NOT FOR YOU TO **TAKE**.

AND.. I DO NOT **CHOOSE** TO GIVE IT.

YET, PERHAPS MEN **SHALL** SING ONE LAST SONG OF **BOASTFUL GONDUR**.

IF SO, THEY'LL SAY HE WAS THE **FIRST** MAN OF THE **VANIR** TO FALL BEFORE THE SLICING SWORD OF...

...CONAN THE CIMMERIAN!



CONAN THE CIMMERIAN! IN TIME TO COME, A NAME TO CONJURE WITH. BUT NOW, CONAN IS MERELY A MIGHTY-THEWED YOUTH, FRESH FROM HIS FIRST TASTE OF BATTLE AT VENARILUM.. AND BECOME A MERCENARY WITH THIS RAIDING-BAND FROM THE NEARBY BORDERS OF WIND-SWEPT AESGAARD...

THE SOUND OF STRIDENT SHOUTING DRAWS HIM TO THE EDGE OF THE RIDGE ON WHICH HE STANDS.. NOR DO HIS NIGHT-DARK EYES VIEW THE SCENE BELOW WITH FAVOR---

THAT **BEARDED** AESIR.. BESIEGED BY A TRIO OF YAPPING FOES!

STILL, WHY SHOULD ONE LION DIE... AND THREE JACKALS LIVE?

NO AFFAIR OF MINE. I'VE DONE MY DAY'S WORK FOR AESIR GOLD.



BY CROM! THEY SHOULD NOT..!



AND, BY CROM.. THEY SHALL NOT!!





THEN, HIS BLADE CUTTING A DEADLY ARC, THE GRIM YOUTH WADES THRU THE CLANGOR OF BATTLE---



... ALL THE TIME SEEING **NOTHING** SAVE THE VALIANT BEARDED AESIR AND THE THREE WHO BESET HIM---

HE IS DOWN! THE TALL ONE IS FALLEN!

THEN.. **STRIKE**.. FOR WE CANNOT HOLD HIM LONG--!

YOU VANIR DOGS! I'LL--



THE NEXT INSTANT-- A BOLT OF LIVING **LIGHTNING**-- AND TWO MEN OF VANAHEIM SHALL NEVER RISE AGAIN---

HAH! IF YOU CAN HANDLE TWO OF THESE PIGS, DARK-HAIR---

SURELY OLAV WILL HAVE NO TROUBLE WITH THE **THIRD**.

I NEVER THOUGHT YOU WOULD, MY FRIEND.



INSOLENT YOUTH! JUST BECAUSE YOU **SAVED MY LIFE**, DON'T DARE TO CALL ME **FRIEND** UNTIL I TELL Y--

WAIT! WHAT IS IT THE **OTHERS** ARE SHOUTING?



THEY'RE FLEEING.
THEN-- WE'VE WON!

THAT'LL TEACH
THOSE RED-HAIRED
SCUM TO COME SNEAK-
ING OVER OUR BORDERS
-- WHEN THEY CAN'T EVEN
DEFEND THEIR OWN.

LET'S GO
AFTER
THEM--!



DON'T
CHASE
THEM! LET
THEM RUN!

HE'S RIGHT, LADS.
FIRST WE BIND OUR
WOUNDS AND BURY
OUR DEAD.

TIME ENOUGH THEN
TO CARRY THE FIGHT
TO THE DOGS' OWN CAMP.



YOU TAKE COMMAND
QUICKLY, BOY, FOR ONE
I SAW JOIN OUR PARTY
ONLY THIS MORNING--
BUT YOU DON'T SEEM TO
KNOW IT'S OLAV WHO
GIVES THE ORDERS HERE.

WHAT
IS YOUR
NAME?

I AM CONAN--
A CIMMERIAN.



AND A YOUNG ONE,
AT THAT. YOU'RE A
LONG WAY FROM
HOME, BOY.

GOT THE WANDERLUST,
EH? WELL, YOU SAVED MY
WEATHERED HIDE, SURE
ENOUGH-- AND HERE'S
MY HAND FOR IT!

TELL ME-- WHY'D YOU
JOIN OUR BAND,
INSTEAD OF THEIRS?
WE BOTH PAY OFF IN
GOOD NORTHERN
GOLD.

BUT YOU
AESIR PAY
MORE.



AN HONEST CIMMERIAN! EH?
WELL, OLAV LIKES THAT.

NOW, I FIGURE THAT THOSE DOGS
WILL STOP TO REST IN THAT PASS
YONDER-- SO WE'LL CLIMB AROUND
AND ATTACK THEM FROM ABOVE.

WHAT THINK YOU OF
THAT, LAD?

YOU PAY-- SO
YOU LEAD.

YOU KNOW,
CONAN-- I
THINK
PERHAPS
YOU ARE
TOO
HONEST.

AND
BESIDES
-- YOU
TALK
TOO
MUCH.

WHILE, NOT FAR DISTANT,
BEHIND HASTILY-ERECTED
DEFENSES, THE BONE-
WEARY MEN OF VANANEIM
WEIGH THEIR CHANCES...

ANOTHER
STRAGGLER
... BEARING
HIS DEAD
COMRADE.

CURSED BE
THE DAY WE FIRST
LOOTED THE BORDER
TOWNS OF
AESGAARD!

SOFT, LAD.. LEST
YOUR GRUMBLING
REACH THE EARS OF
VOLFF HIMSELF.

THIS MORNING WE **OUT-
NUMBERED** OUR FOEMEN.
NOW, OUR FORCES ARE
HALVED.



AND, APART FROM HIS MEN SITS
THEIR LEADER... TALL AND LITHE, HIS
MIND ALIVE WITH THE WILD CUNNING OF
THE BEAST WHOSE HIDE HE WEARS...
THE WILY **VOLFF!**

THE MEN GROW
RESTIVE, MIGHTY
ONE.. **FEARFUL...**

AND NOT WITHOUT
CAUSE, HOTHAR.

WITH GONDUR DEAD,
WE HAVE **NO WARRIOR**
WHO CAN STAND
AGAINST GRIM **OLAV...**
OR THE DARK-HAIRED
CUR WHO **SAVED**
HIM.



BUT, JUST BECAUSE
THEY MUST DIE,
HOTHAR...

DOES IT
FOLLOW
THAT **WE**
MUST PERISH
WITH THEM?

I SEE YOUR
MEANING,
GREAT **VOLFF...**



MEN OF THE NORTHLANDS,
HEED MY WORDS. HOTHAR AND
I GO TO CALL UPON THE
GODS, TO SEEK THEIR
FAVOR THIS DAY.

YOU WILL REMAIN
HERE, UNTIL THE
HOUR WHEN WE
RETURN.

AY,
VOLFF...

MY MEN ARE
CUTTHROATS,
BUT NOT
STUPID ONES.

THEY KNOW FULL
WELL THAT ERE THE
SUN SETS, THEY'LL
HOLD THIS GORGE
WITH THEIR **LIFE'S**
BLOOD!





...YOU SAID OUR MEN WEREN'T FOOLS, GREAT VOLFF.

YET, DID CATTLE EVER AWAIT SLAUGHTER MORE WILLINGLY?

THEY'LL FLEE, AFTER THEY'VE MULLED IT OVER LONG ENOUGH.

BUT EVEN THEN, THEY'LL FORM A BUFFER BETWEEN US AND THE VENGEFUL AESIR.

NO! WHAT'S THIS I SEE BEFORE ME?



A CAVE... WITH STRANGE SYMBOLS ABOVE ITS ENTRANCE...

...AND A GHOSTLY GLOW FROM SOMEWHERE WITHIN.

COME... LET'S SEE WHAT LIES BEYOND THESE STONE PORTALS.



ENTER, VOLFF. ENTER, HOTHAR.

I HAVE BEEN ... WAITING FOR YOU.



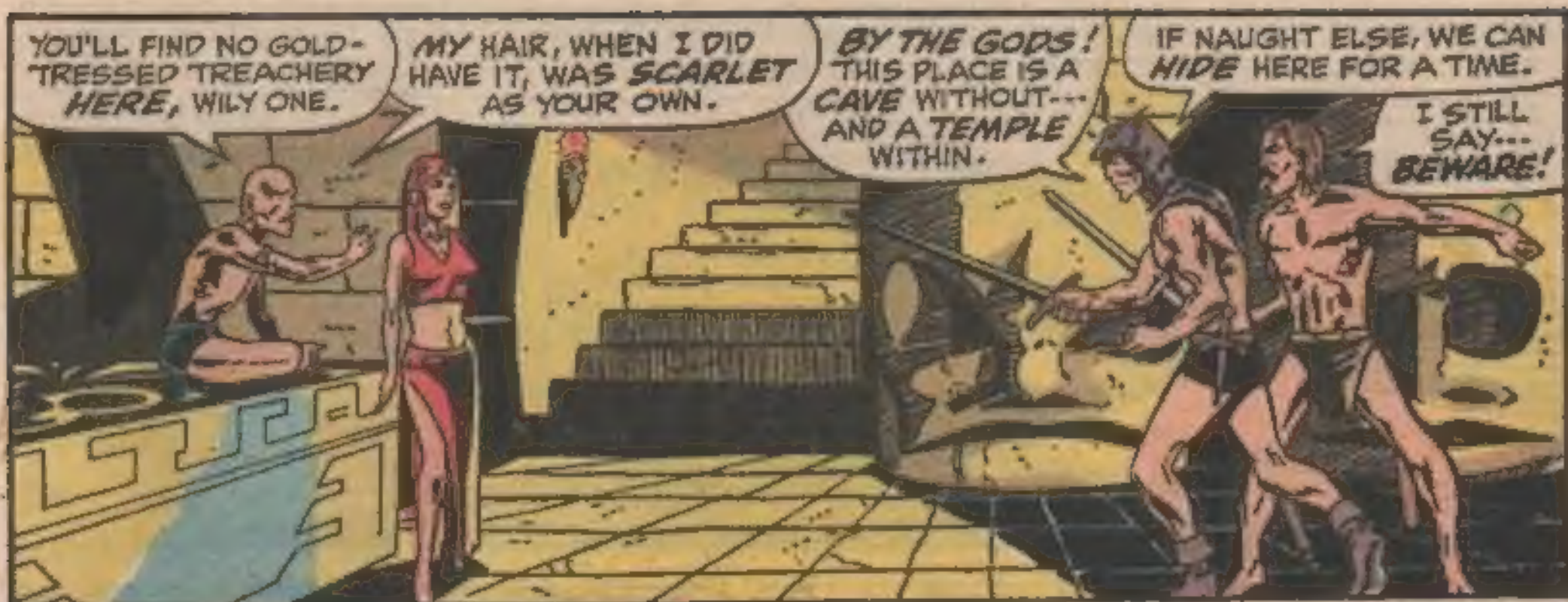
AN OLD MAN, AS THIN AS DEATH ITSELF... AND A YOUNG GIRL!

WHO ARE THEY, TO DWELL IN THESE LONELY HILLS... AND HOW DID THE OLD ONE KNOW OUR NAMES?

THAT WE'LL LEARN, HOTHAR, WHEN WE ACCEPT THEIR INVITATION.

PERHAPS THEY CAN GUIDE US THRU THESE MOUNTAINS... TO A PLACE WHERE OUR PURSUERS CAN NEVER FIND US.

FOLLOW ME.. BUT BE ON GUARD FOR AESIR TRICKERY.



YOU'LL FIND NO GOLD-TRESSED TREACHERY HERE, WILY ONE.

MY HAIR, WHEN I DID HAVE IT, WAS **SCARLET** AS YOUR OWN.

BY THE GODS! THIS PLACE IS A CAVE WITHOUT... AND A TEMPLE WITHIN.

IF NAUGHT ELSE, WE CAN HIDE HERE FOR A TIME.

I STILL SAY... **BEWARE!**



AND I SAY, SCOFFER, THAT YOU NEED NOT FEAR **SHARKOSH**... HE WHO IS CALLED **THE SHAMAN!**

YOUR COMING WAS **FORETOLD** ME IN A VISION I HAD, WHEN LAST I GAZED INTO YONDER **STAR-STONE**.

YEARS AGO, IT FELL FROM THE MANY-JEWELED **SKY**...

THEN, PERHAPS YOU CAN CALL UP FORCES WHICH MAY YET BRING ME **VICTORY!**?



THAT I CAN... FOR A PRICE.

I HAVE NEED OF A STRONG YOUNG **WARRIOR CAPTIVE**... FAR MIGHTIER THAN EITHER OF YOU.

THERE BE SUCH AMONG YOUR **FOEMEN**, NO?



AY. YOUR WORDS WOULD BEST FIT A YOUTHFUL **DARK-HAIR** WHO BATTLES ON THE SIDE OF THE **AESIR**.

BUT TELL ME... WITH THE POWERS YOU SAY YOU HAVE, WHY DO YOU NEED SUCH A ONE?

THAT IS MY AFFAIR.



SUFFICE IT TO SAY, IT CONCERNS THE BEAUTEOUS **HANDMAIDEN** WHO SITS BESIDE ME...

... SHE WHOSE SMILE HAS MADE MORE **BEARABLE** AN OLD MAN'S SELF-EXILE.

WELL? ARE MY TERMS **AGREED TO?**

WHAT HAVE I TO LOSE? **UN-LEASH** YOUR PHANTOM ARMY!

I HAVE NO NEED OF A FULL ARMY, MAN OF THE **VANIR**.

NOW BE **SILENT**... AND YOU WILL OBSERVE MARVELS SUCH AS ARE **WHISPERED ABOUT**, OVER SLOWLY-DYING CAMPFIRES...!

THEN, FROM THE OLD SHAMAN'S LIPS HISSES AN INCANTATION THAT WAS OLD WHEN ATLANTIS SANK... A SPELL SUCH AS ONCE WAS MUTTERED AMONG THE PURPLE-TOWERED CITIES OF ANCIENT, EVIL ACHERON.

A LIVING FIRE SEEMS TO GROW, UNBANKED, WITHIN THE SKY-SENT JEWEL... AN EERIE, PUTRID GLOW FILLS EACH CREVICE OF THE ROCK-HEWN CHAMBER...

...AND THEN, THE STAR-STONE BEGINS TO HUM...!

THE VANIR SKULK ABOUT BELOW, SUSPECTING NOTHING.

YOU WERE WISELY CHOSEN TO AVENGE THE RECENT BORDER RAIDS, OLAV.

BUT WHY DO YOU SCOWL SO?

HOW CAN THE ESCAPE OF ONE LONE FOE MAR YOUR JOY, OLAV?

YOU DON'T KNOW HIM, CONAN.

AS LONG AS HE LIVES, NO AESIR CAN SLEEP WITH BOTH EYES CLOSED.

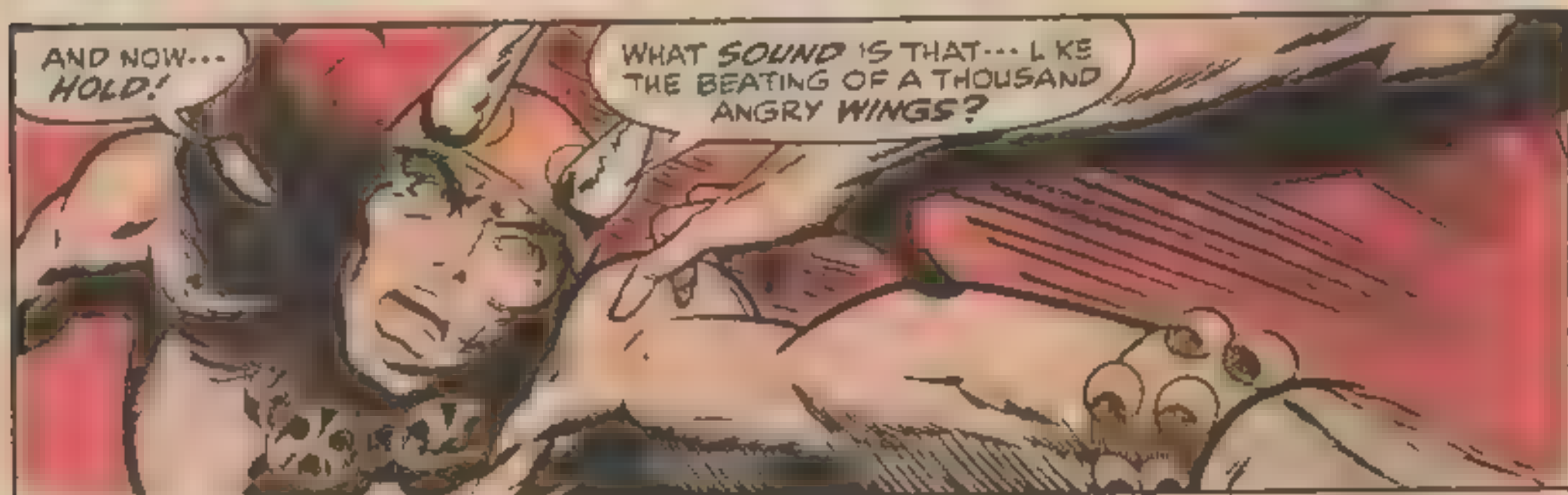
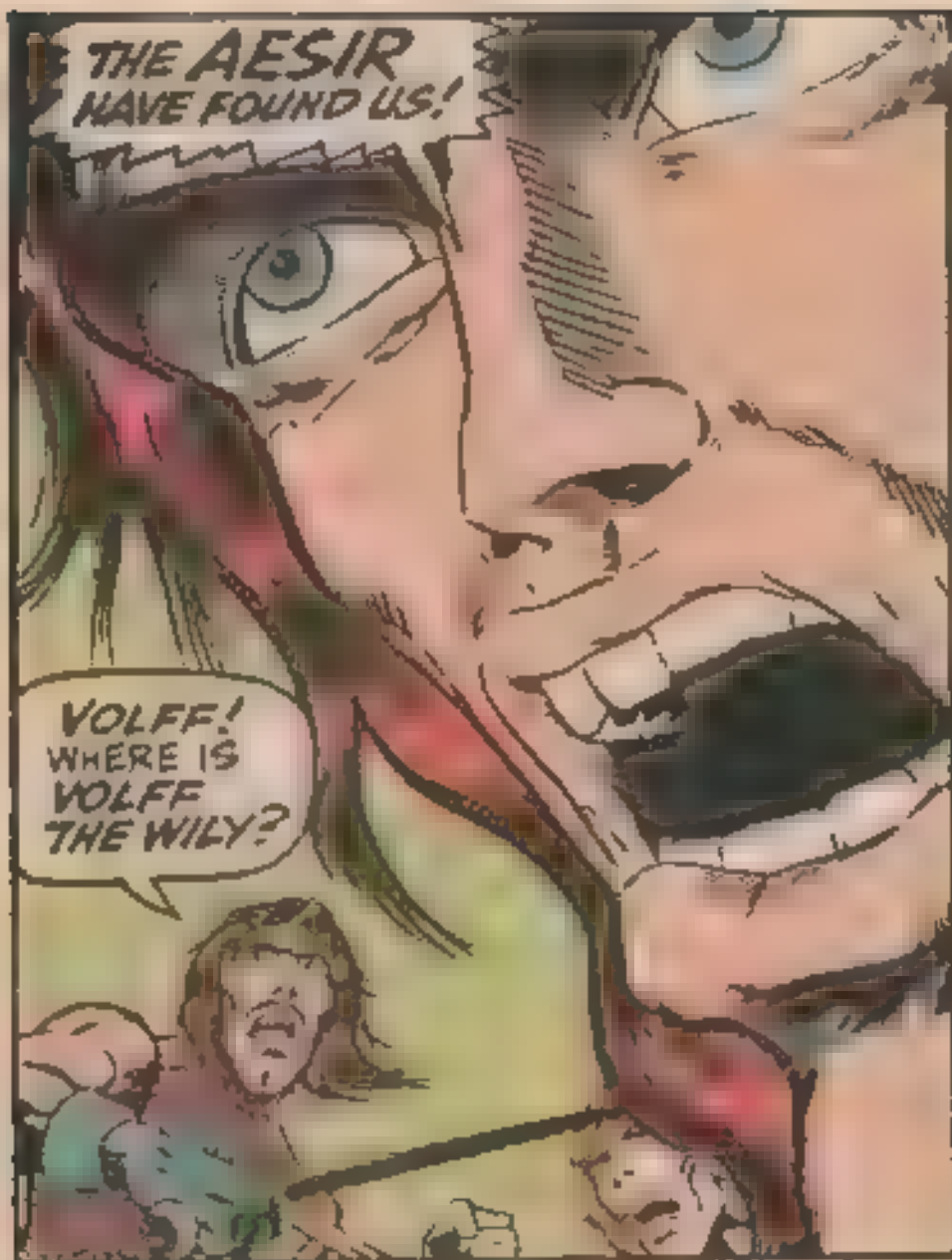
STILL, WE OF AESGAARD HAVE A SAYING: "IF THE WOLF BE NOT AT HOME WHEN YOU COME TO CALL..."

BECAUSE, STRIPLING, THEIR LEADER VOLFF IS NOT AMONG THEM.

HE MUST HAVE FLED, HIS NOSE SNIFFING DISASTER IN THE WIND.

"...THEN SLAY ITS PUPS!"

ATTACK, MY BROTHERS!



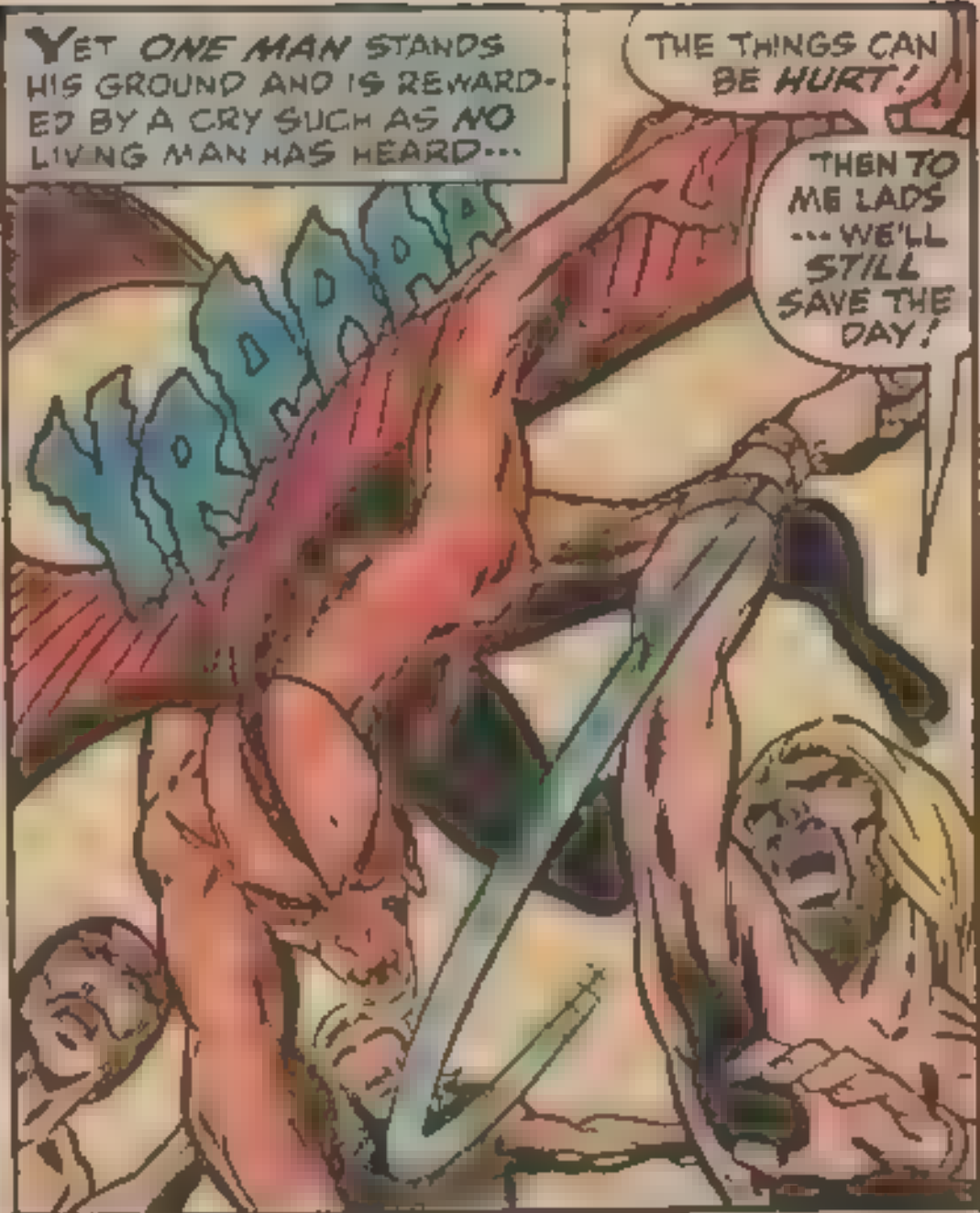
DOWN UPON THE STARTLED TRIBESMEN
SWOOP THE TRIO FROM BEYOND...
NOR DO THEY SPARE EITHER AESIR OR
VANIR IN THEIR DEADLY,
VOICELESS ASSAULT...



YET ONE MAN STANDS
HIS GROUND AND IS REWARD-
ED BY A CRY SUCH AS NO
LIVING MAN HAS HEARD...

THE THINGS CAN
BE HURT!

THEN TO
ME LADS
...WE'LL
STILL
SAVE THE
DAY!



BUT, THE DAY IS NOT FOR
SAVING... AS A PINIONED
SHAPE SPRINGS UPON
OLAV FROM BEHIND...



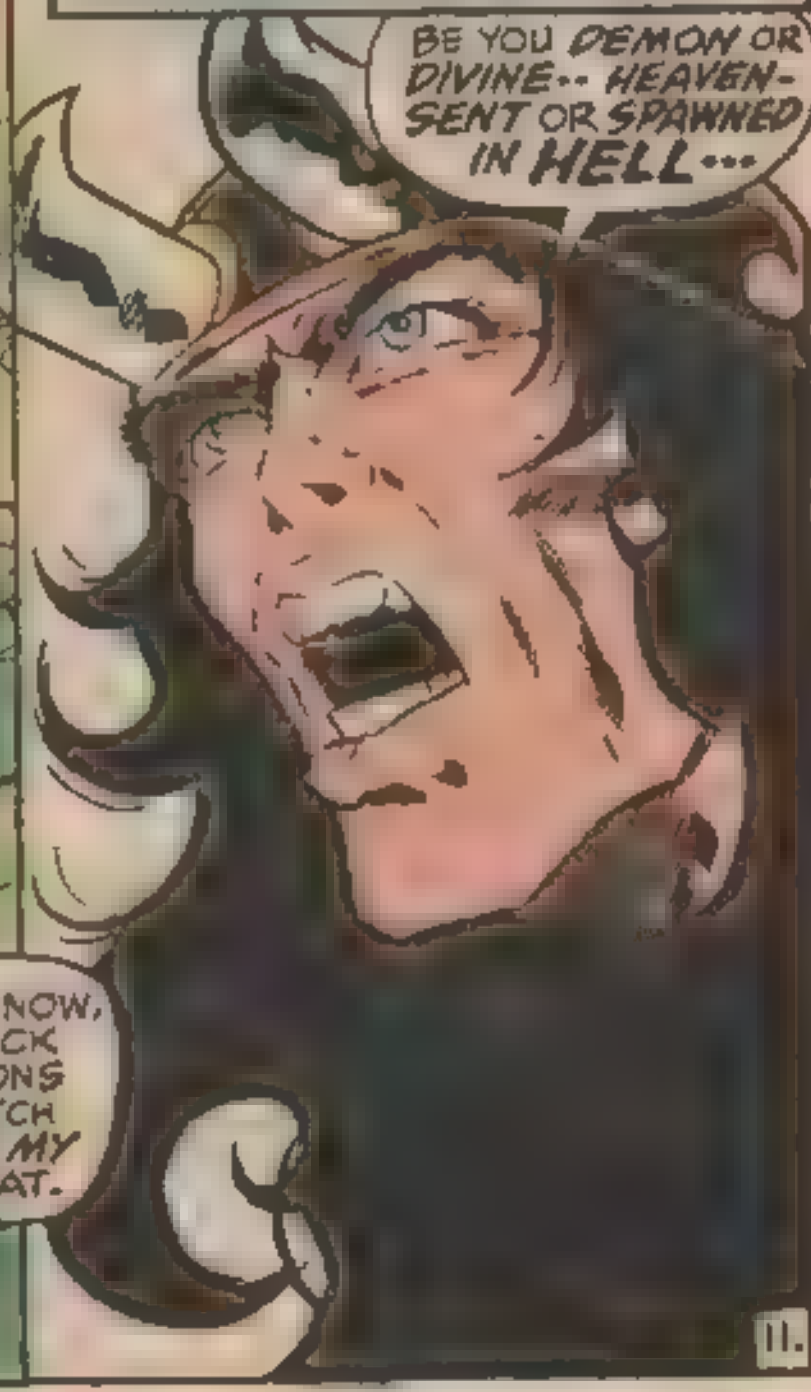
...AND HE CRUMPLES IN
A LIFELESS HEAP!

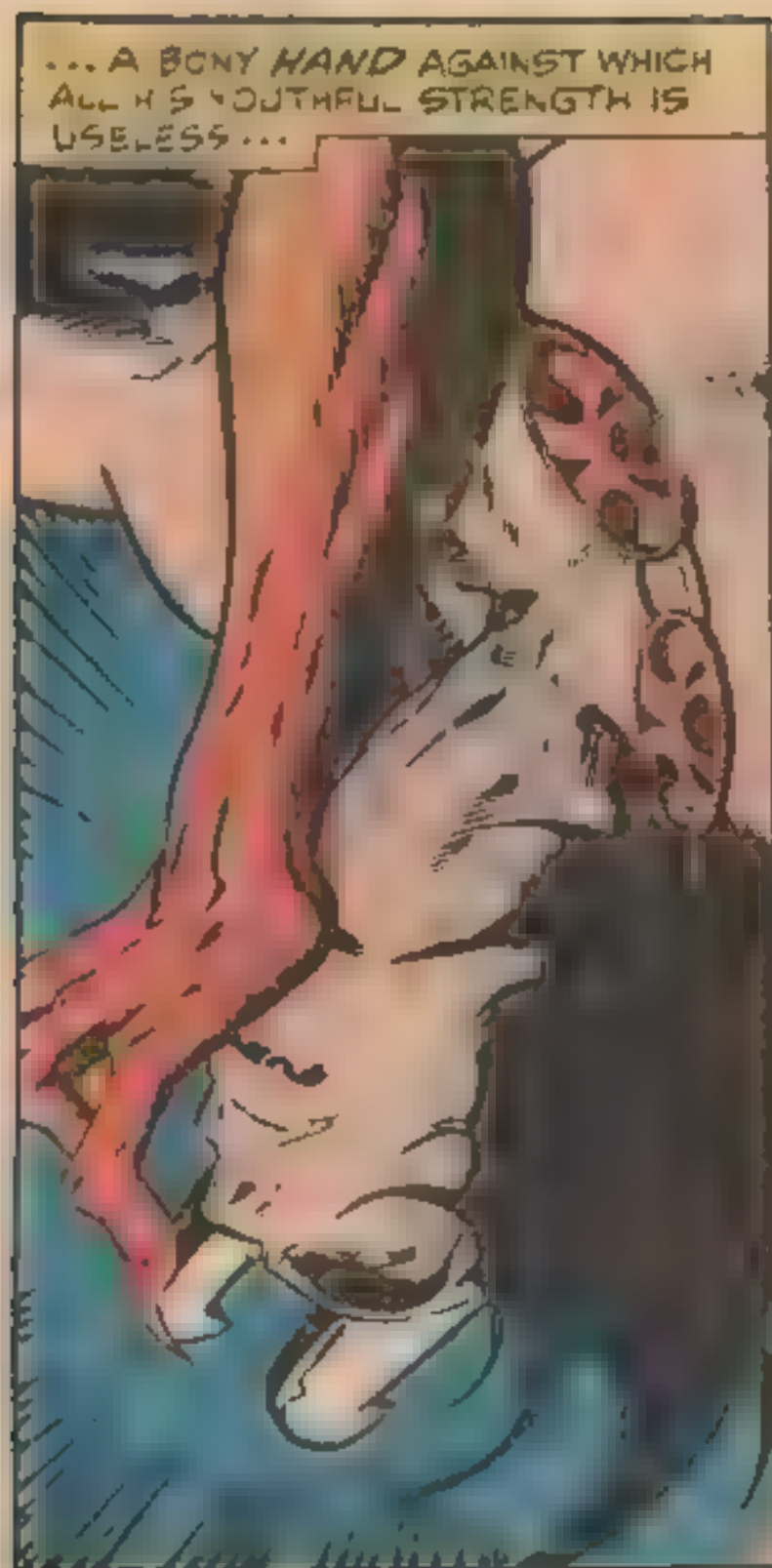


FOR THE PAST FEW FATEFUL
SECONDS, YOUNG CONAN HAS HELD
BACK FROM THE ONE-SIDED BATTLE
...FOR ABOVE ALL ELSE, THE
BARBAROUS CIMMERIANS DO FEAR
THINGS SUPERNATURAL! BUT
NOW, AT THE SIGHT OF A VALIANT
LIFE SNUFFED OUT LIKE THE MEREST
CANDLE, THE FEAR-SPELL IS BROKEN...

BE YOU DEMON OR
DIVINE... HEAVEN-
SENT OR SPAWNED
IN HELL...

AND NOW,
BLACK
TALONS
TWITCH
FOR MY
THROAT.





... A BONY HAND AGAINST WHICH ALL HIS YOUTHFUL STRENGTH IS USELESS ...



... THEN THE FEELING OF BEING DROPPED LIKE SOME BROKEN RAG DOLL TOWARDS PEAKS ON WHICH A BLANKET OF SNOW STILL LINGERS ...



... AND FINALLY, A NAMELESS, ALL-CONSUMING BLACKNESS!

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AN ETERNITY LATER, CONAN DRIFTS BACK TO THE WAKING WORLD, ESCORTED BY THE TOUCH OF SOFT FINGERS... THE WAFTING TRACE OF AN EXOTIC SCENT... THE CARESS OF A GIRL'S HUSHED VOICE.

ARISE, YOUNG BARBARIAN. YOUR TIME IS ALMOST COME.

WHO CALLS CONAN... BACK FROM THE PLACE OF DREAMS?

I AM TARA... SO-CALLED BY THE GREAT SHAMAN.

SHAMAN? AM I, THEN, THE PRISONER OF A SORCERER?

YOU SPEAK QUICKLY TO THE POINT. MY MASTER IS PERHAPS A SORCERER OF SORTS... BUT HIS POWERS ARE NOT TRULY HIS OWN.

THEY ALL DERIVE FROM THE STAR-STONE... WHICH FORETOLD EVEN THAT YOU WOULD BE DELIVERED UNTO US.

WHAT DOES HE WANT OF ME? AM I TO BE SACRIFICED UPON SOME PAGAN ALTAR?

NO, HANDSOME ONE. THERE SHALL BE NO SACRIFICE... BUT ONLY A TRADE.

A TRADE? BUT WHAT..?

SAY NO MORE, BUT KEEP SILENCE.

WITHOUT YON WOODEN BARS, THE CEREMONY BEGINS...

THEN, CONAN'S BLOOD RUNS COLD AS HE BEHOLDS ANEW THE WINGED DEMONS... NEAR THEM, TWO SMIRKING VANIR... AND A WIZENED OLD ONE WHO CAN ONLY BE... THE SHAMAN.

O STAR-STONE... SACRED JEWEL WHICH FELL LIKE RAIN FROM ON HIGH...

THE VANIR-MEN BE STILL SCOFFERS... NOT TRUE BELIEVERS IN YOUR AWESOME POWER.

GIVE US A SIGN OF THAT POWER, SO THAT THE CEREMONY OF TRANSFERAL MAY BE ACCOMPLISHED.

THEN BEFORE THE AMAZED EYES OF VANIR AND CIMMERIAN ALIKE, A VISION FALLS THE DARK-ENED CHAMBER-- A SCENE OF A WORLD-THAT-ONCE-WAS...

BEHOLD VALUSIA... MIGHTIEST MANLAND KINGDOM IN THE DAYS BEFORE ATLANTIS SANK.

EVEN I HAVE NE'ER BEFORE DELYED SO FAR INTO THE PAST.

MORE, GREAT STONE... TELL US MORE!

YES, SHAWAN AND SAVAGES... GAZE DEEPLY... SEE THE LATTER DAYS OF VALUSIA WHEN THE LAND WAS OFT RULED BY BARBARIAN MONARCHS...

...AND WHEN THE GREATEST OF THESE USURPERS WAS THE OUTCAST ATLANTEAN... **KING KULL!**

WATCH IN HORROR NOW, AS THE CATACLYSM ROCKS THE WORLD... AS EARTHQUAKES AND VOLCANOES CHANGE THE FACE OF A PLANET... AS VALUSIA HERSELF FADES INTO LEGEND...

...AND THE THIRST-CRAZED OCEANS DRINK THE ISLAND MEN CALLED ATLANTIS!

NEXT, BEHOLD A BABY BORN NOT TWENTY WINTERS AGO... ON A BATTLEFIELD IN CIMMERIA, AMID A RAID BY THE FEARSOME VANIR...

LOOK UPON THAT BABE, NOW GROWN TO YOUNG MANHOOD... RECEIVING HIS BAPTISM OF FIRE AND SWORD AT DISTANT VENARIUM, BUT A WINTER GONE...

AND NOW, BE WITNESS TO THE MOST AWESOME SIGHT OF ALL...

...AS THIS BARBARIAN AMONGST A HAILING POPLACE, CROWNS HIMSELF KING OF A MIGHTY HYBORIAN EMPIRE!

HOLD!

IT'S NOT THE PAST WE SEE NOW... BUT THE FUTURE.

YET, THE CIMMERIAN CAN HAVE NO FUTURE --FOR HE IS TO BE OFFERED UP IN THE CEREMONY OF TRANSFERRAL

I MUST SEE MORE... STILL MORE!

WHILE NEARBY, YOUNG CONAN WASTES FEW PRECIOUS MOMENTS TRYING TO FATHOM THE MYSTERIES OF TIME AND SPACE...

... BUT CONTINUES TO TEST THE BARS OF HIS MAKESHIFT PRISON.

AND STILL THE VISIONS DANCE MADLY ON... REVEALING MAN HURLED BACK INTO AN AGE OF STONE, AND BEGINNING ANEW HIS SLOW, UPWARD CLIMB...

...TOWARDS WONDERS UNDREAMED-OF EVEN IN THIS, THE HEIGHT OF THE HYBORIAN AGE.

BY THE GODS! I SEEM TO BEHOLD FAR-OFF STYGIA... UNDER ANOTHER NAME... IN ANOTHER TIME.

I MUST SEE MORE.. I MUST KNOW MORE! MORE!

STOP, OLD MAN! YOU ARE GOING TOO FAR!

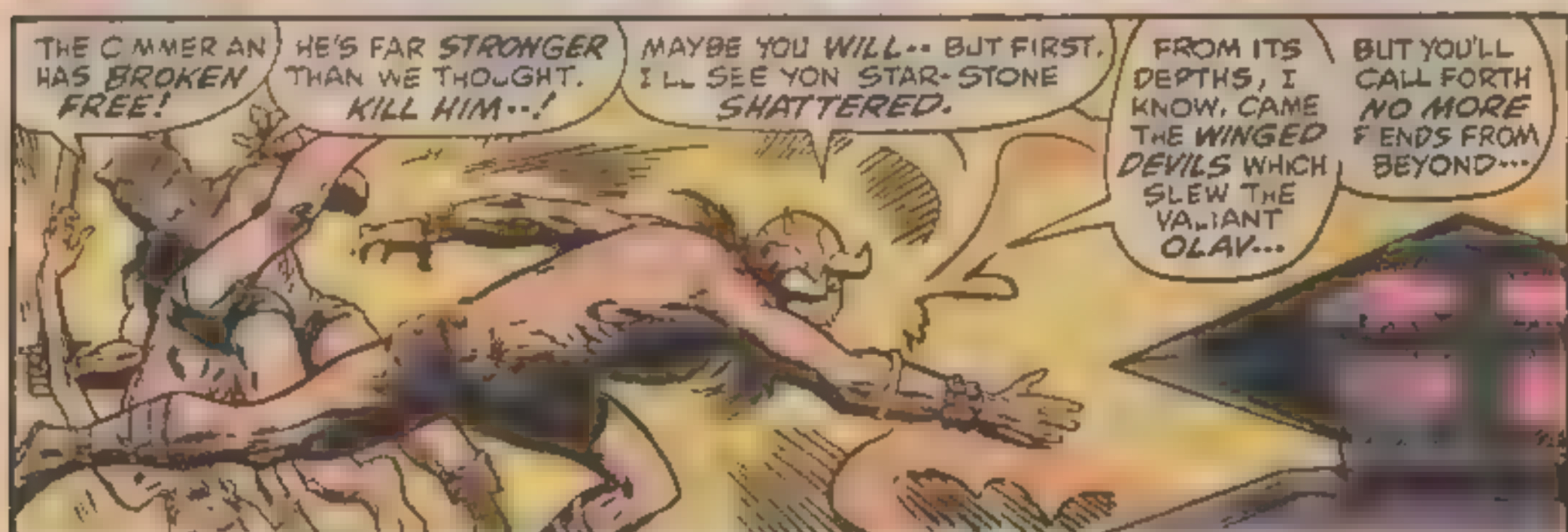
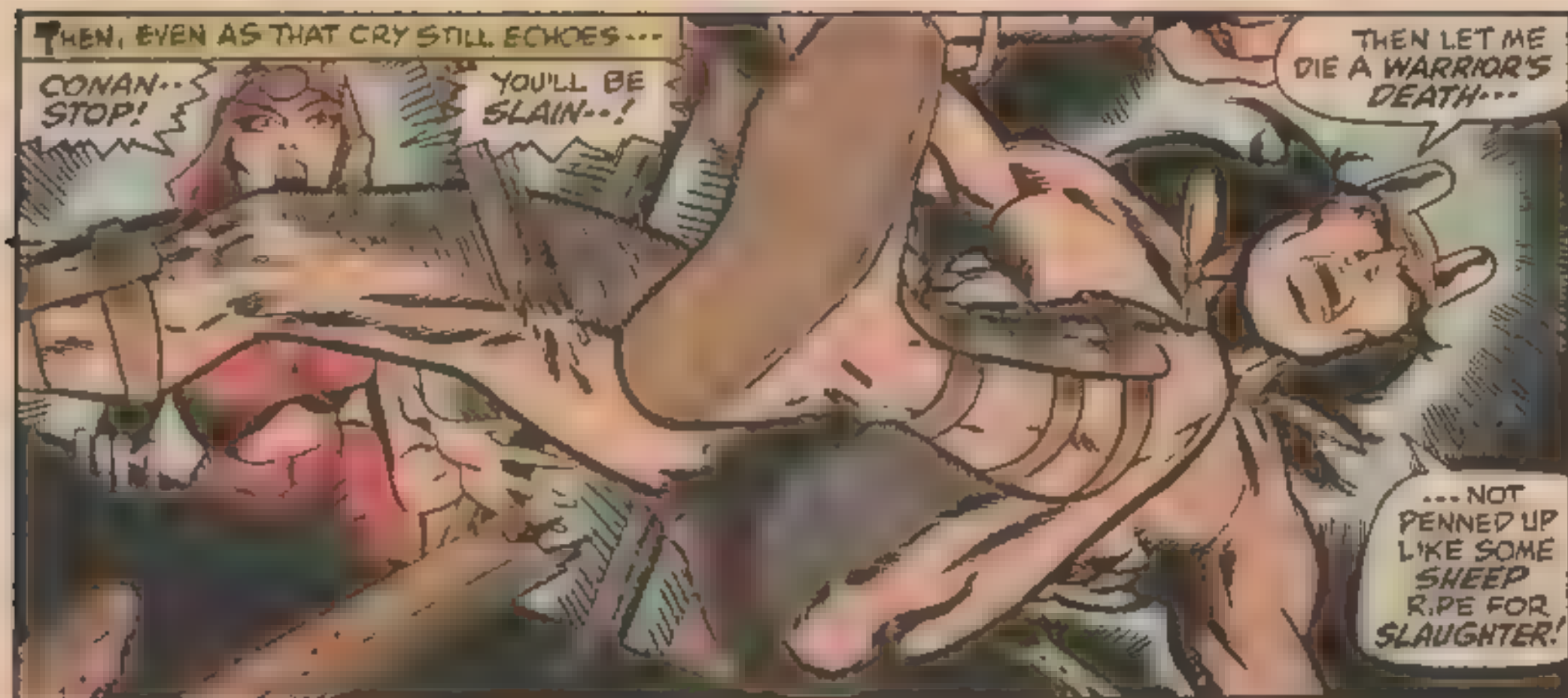
WE WERE NOT MEANT TO LOOK ON THINGS LIKE THIS.. BEFORE THEIR TIME.

BUT THE WIDE-EYED SHAMAN HEEDS NOT... AS THE IMAGE OF MAN'S ULTIMATE CONQUEST FLOODS THE PIT-DARK CHAMBER... AND THE EARTH, THE CENTER OF PRIMITIVE MAN'S SMALL UNIVERSE IS LEFT FAR, FAR BEHIND!

VOLFF... WHAT MADNESS IS THIS? THE STARS -- THE STARS...

THESE SIGHTS -- HAVE DRIVEN THE OLD MAN MAD!

AAAAARRRRRR



AND BEHIND THEM, THE **WINGED ONES** FADE SWIFTLY BACK INTO THAT DIM NETHERWORLD WHICH SPAWNED THEM, LIKE STRAWS CONSUMED BY A HOLOCAUST---



--- WHILE THE DYING **SHAMAN** SHOUTS UNAVAILING SPELLS INTO THE RAGING INFERNO---



---AND **VOLFF THE WILY** LEARNS AT LAST THAT ALL HIS TRICKERY HAS BUT LIGHTED HIS WAY TO **FLAMING DEATH**---



FOR, EVEN AS CONAN BEARS HIS LOVELY BURDEN INTO THE OPEN AIR, A FIERY EXPLOSION ROCKS THE CAVERN BEHIND THEM!



YOU **FOOL**... YOU BARBARIAN FOOL... YOU HAVE **DOOMED ME**...

CURSE THE MOMENT OF WEAKNESS WHEN I FELT **PITY** FOR YOU!

DOOMED? NAY, YOU'RE **SAFE** NOW... OUT OF THAT **MADMAN'S CLUTCHES!**



YOU STILL... DO NOT **COMPREHEND**. BUT YOU **SHALL**... IN A FEW FLEETING MOMENTS---



WHAT ARE YOU **RAVING** ABOUT, WOMAN?

HAVE I **SAVED** YOU FROM THE FIRES WITHIN, ONLY TO HAVE YOU MOUTH **NONSEN--?**



CROM'S DEVILS!

WHAT VILE **SORCERY** IS THIS??





THE FEMALE I CARRIED FROM THE CAVE...

... IS CHANGED INTO ONE OF THE WINGED DEMONS!

SO YOU... WOULD CALL ME, MORTAL...



NOT LONG AGO... THE OLD SHAMAN WHISKED ME... FROM MY UNIVERSE WITHIN THE SHATTERED STAR-STONE...

... TRANSFORMED ME INTO AN EARTHLY HANDMAID, TO LIGHT HIS LONELY DAYS.

BUT HE COULD NOT KEEP ME HERE FOR-E'ER... UNLESS ANOTHER TOOK MY PLACE... IN MY DISTANT WORLD...

AND THAT OTHER WAS TO BE... CONAN?



AY... AND SO YOU KNOW AT LAST... THE SECRET OF THE CEREMONY OF TRANSFERRAL.

BUT NOW... MY OWN COSMOS CALLS ME... TO ENDURE ETERNALLY THE HELLISH FLAMES WHICH FLICKER THERE.

FARE THEE WELL, MORTAL... AND RECALL ONE DAY... THAT TARA FOUND YOU FAIR...



WONDER UPON WONDER!

THE WINGED ONE IS GONE... TO WORLDS WHERE NO MAN CAN FOLLOW.



THEN, THERE IS NO MORE NEED FOR SPOKEN WORDS, FOR NONE ARE LEFT ALIVE TO HEAR THEM. SMOKE POURS FROM THE SHAMAN'S CAVERN, DARK HERALD OF THE DEATH THAT ALL WITHIN HAVE DIED...

NIGHT-WINGED *THOUGHTS* FLIT ACROSS CONAN'S BRAIN
... *MEMORIES* OF THE DREAD DEEDS OF THE DAY JUST
DONE... THE SLAYING OF A VALIANT FRIEND... THE MARVELS
OF AN INVISIBLE WORLD REVEALED... IMAGES OF MANY-
TOWERED CITIES AND DYING CONTINENTS AND... AND...

... AND *KINGS*! AY, WASN'T
THERE SOMETHING ABOUT A
KINGDOM? A VISION OF
CONAN AS *MONARCH* OF
SOME UNGUESSED-AT LAND?

BUT ALREADY THE
IMAGE *FADES*... TOO
LONG AGO AND TOO
FANTASTIC TO TROUBLE
THE MIND OF A YOUTH
WHO HAS NEITHER
DAGGER NOR VENISON
TO SUSTAIN HIM.

THE MOON IS A WHITE, WATCH-
ING EYE... THE JOURNEY HOME
IS HARD... AND THERE ARE
NO REALITIES WORTH THE
WISHING, SAVE *FOOD* AND
A FINELY-WROUGHT *SWORD*.

FINIS! 20.

THE HYBORIAN PAGE

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THE WORLD OF CONAN

Conan the Barbarian is the most famous creation of Robert E. Howard (1906-1936), one of the greatest writers of weird fantasy who ever lived. A perfectionist, Howard invented a whole world—an entire era, as it were—in which his Cimmerian hero could live, and fight, and conquer. This world was the earth of 12,000 years ago—between the legendary sinking of ancient Atlantis and the beginnings of written history—a world in which man still struggled for dominance over the twin terrors of sword and sorcery. A brief outline of that world follows:

To understand the earth as it was in the time of Conan, we must first go back even further—to a time 20,000 years gone. Then, the major kingdoms on the main continent were now-forgotten lands such as Valusia and Grandar, while the barbarians of the great island called Atlantis gradually rose to become a powerful nation themselves—even establishing a foothold on the mainland.

But then, the Cataclysm rocked the earth! Atlantis and its eastern counterpart Lemuria both sank beneath towering waves—and the face of the whole planet was changed! The world sank back, back into savage barbarism once more—then slowly began anew its long, painful climb towards civilization.

In the far North, a tribe known as the Hyborians grew stronger than their neighbors, and gradually spread over the main continent until they had conquered and settled much of it. It is from them that the period derives its name: The Hyborian Age. Over the centuries, new kingdoms rose on the ashes of the old: Nemedia, Zamora, Brythunia, Zingara, and—most powerful of all—Aquilonia.

Of course, even then, there were other kingdoms and traditions as well. In the north were such still-barbarian strongholds as Vanabheim, Asgaard, Hyperborea, and Cimmeria—the latter being the fierce, frozen birthplace of Conan himself. In the south dwelt the mysterious Stygians (ancestors of the Egyptian pharaohs) and the vital black kingdoms such as Kush—while, to the east, descendants of the ancient Lemurians set up a great empire as the Hyrkans.

This, then, is the untamed world of Conan—a world now forgotten, but where once a planet stood at the crossroads between the way of civilization and the way of savagery and black magic—a world where a mighty-thewed barbarian could hold the destiny of mankind in his great, grim hands.

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LAIR OF THE BEAST-MEN!

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Below is a map of the world in Conan's day, based upon a chart given to us by Glenn Lord, literary executor of the Howard estate and one of the Cimmerian's greatest admirers. Though later cataclysms once more changed the face of the globe several centuries after Conan's time, the northern lands stand where do the Scandinavian nations of today—Nemedia and Aquilonia occupy the land where now Germany and France exist—and the east-west path of the River Styx roughly parallels the northernmost shores of today's Africa.

